



Joggers enjoy the pedestrian bridge



Canoe Access to the Potomac River



The C&amp;O Canal and Towpath

Both the C&O Canal Towpath and the Capital Crescent Trail are excellent available resources for viewing and enjoying the Canal Road Scenic Byway Corridor. The trails offer excellent views of the historic canal, associated historic features such as locks, retaining walls, and other structures, the Potomac River, and woodlands. Within Georgetown, the towpath also provides excellent views of the historic buildings making up this waterfront district of the city. Bicycling along the scenic byway roadways is not recommended. Because of the high volumes of traffic, narrow roadway lanes, parked vehicles on M Street in Georgetown, and lack of shoulders along Canal Road, bicycling is considered unsafe. The closely paralleling C&O Canal and Capital Crescent Trails are an excellent and safe alternative to bicycling the roadway portions of the corridor.

### Walking

Experiencing the byway on foot can be a rewarding experience for a byway user because of the proximity it allows the user to enjoy in accessing the intrinsic qualities and resources that define the scenic route in Georgetown. Time spent at individual sites can be allotted as the user desires. Physical access to the details of a particular site can also be increased. This can be especially rewarding for persons interested in, for example, architectural details of buildings, informative plaques and signs at historic sites, photographic and panoramic views, and details of particular sites. Walking also presents opportunities to experience the neighborhoods, culture and amenities of the city that cannot be enjoyed when driving or riding in a vehicle. Stopping for a snack at local restaurants brings the walker into close contact with residents of the city. Discovering new stores, art galleries, and cultural institutions such can also be a rewarding experience. A byway user can easily navigate the entire length of the M Street portion of the byway at a leisurely pace in less than an hour. Whether initiating a walking tour of M Street from a fixed location such as a hotel, or

from a location where a driver may park, walking presents the best opportunity to view resources in the greatest detail.

Walking on byway road sections is only recommended on the M Street portion of the byway. Sidewalks are provided on each side of the street and there are protected crosswalks at intersections. Walking along the Canal Road portion of the byway, however, is not practical or safe. There are no sidewalks along this portion of the corridor, nor are there adequate and safe distances from the roadway edge to the portions of woodland that would be accessible by foot. The river side of the roadway consists of a retaining wall adjacent to the in-bound travel lane without adequate space for foot traffic. The upland side of the roadway, also without sidewalks, is heavily wooded and, along much of the roadway, is bordered by steep hillsides. A walker can best enjoy the corridor by using the towpath along the C&O Canal. This access allows direct contact with many of the resources defining the scenic corridor: the C&O Canal, the Potomac River, woodlands, views of the river valley, and a general contact with nature not possible in an automobile.

### Canoeing

The Canal Road Scenic Byway is unique in that it is possible to experience and enjoy the corridor by canoe or kayak. The C&O Canal closely parallels and is within sight of Canal Road nearly the entire distance from Key Bridge to the Maryland state line. Canoeing the C&O is an easy and enjoyable way to experience the intrinsic resources that define the byway. The canal passes through the historic environs of Georgetown where several operating original locks are located. As it moves westward the canal passes alongside Canal Road and then into a long stretch of alternating open and wooded landscapes that lie between Canal Road and the Potomac River. Canoeing the canal is easy because of the access provided at Fletcher's Boat House, which is located

behind the historic Abner Cloud House. Canoes can be rented at the boat house or people can bring their own and launch them from this location. Canoes can also be rented at Jack's Boathouse under Key Bridge.

### Recommendations

- Encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as tour buses, bicycles and bike trails, and hiking trails and pedestrian walkways.
- Provide safe and secure visitor parking from where visitors may access the Canal and foot and bike trails, or rent bicycles, rowboats, and canoes.
- Between Glover Archbold Park and 37th Street, incorporate pedestrian improvements with the new entrance to Georgetown University.
- Assist commercial operators develop additional safe and pleasurable boat tours or rental boat operations on the Potomac River.
- Coordinate with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to identify the Canal Road Scenic Byway on neighborhood maps posted in the Rosslyn and Foggy Bottom Metro Rail stations and in appropriate public literature available from WMATA. Support and promote bicycle-Metro Rail connections.
- Develop an informational package for tour operators highlighting the Canal Road Scenic Byway as a destination or route, along with information on specific intrinsic resources, as needed.
- Identify and coordinate with local tour bus and van operators who would have interest in adding the Canal Road Scenic Byway as a tour highlight, destination, or as a completely separate tour.



Recent Trail Construction

- Identify and coordinate with long-distance and out-of-state tour bus operators who may use the Clara Barton Parkway and Canal Road as an access route to central Washington to determine their interest in highlighting the byway as buses enter or depart the city.
- Develop and post directional signage or designate specific bicycle routes for bicyclists to safely access from the byway resources along Canal Road and M Street.
- Investigate the need for and, where needed, provide bicycle parking and temporary locker facilities.
- Develop and disseminate promotional materials and maps for pedestrian use. Such materials should focus on interesting places to be encountered along the byway. As appropriate, information should be included on local retail establishments or commercial areas providing services such as meals, drinks and snacks. These materials should be made available at hotels, information kiosks, convention and meeting locations, and bus and train stations.
- In coordination with heritage tourism organizations, promote walking tours of areas within or near the Canal Road corridor.
- Develop and place informational and direction signs at locations that would support pedestrian use of the byway. This is important in directing pedestrians along the M Street portion of the byway to and from the C&O Canal and then along the canal towpath toward the Maryland state line.
- Include references to canoeing and kayaking in all promotional materials dealing with recreation in the byway corridor.



Fig. 4-3  
**SIGNAGE PLAN**

## 4 The Component Plans Commerce and Facilities Plan

### Plan for Managing Development

To a large extent, the framework for managing development is already in place. Each of the byway Planning Partners described in Chapters 2 and 5 has its own review mechanisms for activities within its jurisdiction.

It is anticipated that designation of Canal Road as a National Scenic Byway would not induce much additional traffic, nor is it likely to have a growth-inducing effect along the byway. Designation and plan implementation would not interfere with existing commercial traffic or access to businesses. The District Department of Transportation and the byway management organization will review and institute measures as part of normal city road maintenance to help ensure the safety of sightseers in personal vehicles, as well as bicycles and pedestrians.

### Signage Plan

There is a moderate amount of signage along Canal Road. For the most part, existing signs indicate the times of restricted one-way use, speed limits, and the names of intersecting streets. In some locations, multiple signs are difficult to interpret.

Canal Road should be identified to travelers as a scenic byway. Given the relatively short length of Canal Road and the limited number of access points, a relatively small number of byway signs is recommended. Either freestanding sign or signs affixed to existing utility poles may be used. Placing a sign near a traffic signal allows travelers more opportunity to read it.

For pedestrians, runners, and bicyclists, informational and directional signs should be placed at locations that would support such uses of the byway, as recommended under the Multi-Modal Plan. These signs should be installed for new multi-use trail connections and to link existing trails

### Compliance with Outdoor Advertising Laws

At the federal level, the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 (23 USC 131) controls outdoor advertising on Interstates and other roadways. A section of this act permits the existence of signs lawfully in existence on October 22, 1965, as determined by the state (District). An amendment to this act applies to state scenic byway programs.

The District of Columbia has a long-standing tradition of banning billboard advertising. The District zoning regulations prohibit billboards in historic districts and in the central business district. Erection of a billboard elsewhere requires a permit administered by the District Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, and the billboard must comply with size restrictions; presently, the District has a moratorium on erecting new billboards. There are no billboards along Pennsylvania Avenue, and this plan supports continued strict controls of outdoor advertising within the corridor.

### Recommendations

- A limited number of Canal Road Scenic Byway signs should be placed strategically along the byway to be readable by travelers in vehicles, on bicycles, or on foot.
- Identify significant byway resources on or near the byway for which directional signs on the byway roads may be appropriate. Design, fabricate, and install these signs.
- Provide signage indicating the connection between the Canal Tow Path and the Potomac Heritage Trail.
- Improve signage at the intersection of Canal Road with Foxhall Road and at the intersection of Canal Road and Fletcher's Boat House access road.

### Suggested Vehicle Byway Sign Locations

**Location:** Georgetown end of Canal Road in front of the former Car Barns at the M Street end of Key Bridge  
**Travel Direction:** Westbound  
**Jurisdiction:** District Department of Transportation

**Location:** Immediately east of the Georgetown University access road  
**Travel Direction:** Westbound  
**Jurisdiction:** District Department of Transportation; Georgetown University

**Location:** Canal Road end of Chain Bridge (first available safe space on the right-hand side of the roadway after turning onto it from Chain Bridge)  
**Travel Direction:** Eastbound  
**Jurisdiction:** National Park Service; District Department of Transportation

**Location:** Immediately east of the intersection with Arizona Avenue  
**Travel Direction:** Eastbound  
**Jurisdiction:** National Park Service; District Department of Transportation

